

Customer Support Ruling
Mailing Standards
Headquarters, US Postal Service
Washington DC 20260-6808

Nonpostal Containers - Standard Mail Mailings

PS-165 (M011)

UPDATED October 1996

Domestic Mail Manual (DMM) standards require mailers to presort mail into packages, trays and sacks, as applicable. Very small local mailings often will not result in any meaningful tray or sack sortation. For example, the major portion of a church's mail may be for the same 5-digit ZIP Code.

Many post offices have, in the past, found it effective to allow such mailers to present their mail in paper bags, shoe boxes, etc., and have a separation of the packages performed at the acceptance unit as local 5-digit and "all others." It is not our intent to preclude such procedures where they are mutually advantageous. However, the following guidelines should be adhered to when mailings are accepted in nonpostal containers:

1. "Paper sacking" should generally not be allowed for mailings that exceed 40 pounds.
2. Nonpostal containers should *not* be accepted from mailers who routinely prepare non-local small mailings even when addresses are very concentrated in a few ZIP Codes, e.g., a shopper to another town.
3. All mailings must be accepted and verified for proper postage and package sortation.
4. A mailer should always be required to separate the local mail (for areas within the delivery units of the office of mailings) and out-of-town mail.
5. In those offices where mail is accepted at a station and transported to the mail weigh unit for verification, the identity of the total mailings must be maintained. This will generally require postal equipment to be used for all but the smallest mailings.

While small volume mailers, as described, may present small volume mailings in nonpostal containers, mailers must meet the packaging and minimum volume requirements for the class of mail and the appropriate presort level rate.

Anita J. Bizzotto
Manager